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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - IRAQ TSUNAMI - HUMANITARIAN AID AND POLITICS  
PARIS - THURSDAY, JANUARY 06, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#)1. IRAQ
- [1](#)2. TSUNAMI - HUMANITARIAN AID AND POLITICS

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

POLITICS AND HUMANITARIAN AID ARE TWO KEY WORDS IN MANY OF TODAY'S COMMENTARIES, WHILE FRONT PAGES ARE MOSTLY DEVOTED TO DOMESTIC SOCIAL ISSUES. LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION IS AN EXCEPTION WITH ITS LEAD STORY ON IRAQ AND THE ELECTIONS, WHICH EDITORIALIST PATRICK SABATIER CONSIDERS WILL BE NOTHING MORE THAN "AN ILLUSION." (SEE PART C)

WITH REGARD TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE TSUNAMI DISASTER AND THE RELIEF EFFORTS UNDERWAY, SOME COMMENTATORS CALL FOR A "TRUCE" IN THE RIVALRY BETWEEN NATIONS (LA CROIX), OTHERS POINT TO U.S. "ULTERIOR MOTIVES" (LIBERATION) WHILE OTHERS STILL (LE FIGARO) EXPLAIN HOW "A NATURAL DISASTER CAN ALSO LEAD TO DOING POLITICS DIFFERENTLY." (SEE PART C)

THE HEARINGS ON THE NOMINATION OF ALBERTO GONZALES AS ATTORNEY GENERAL LEAD LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION TO TITLE ITS REPORT: "AN ADVOCATE OF TORTURE TO HEAD THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IN THE U.S."

IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO PIERRE PRIER WRITES A REPORT ON "A MYSTERIOUS ANTI-AMERICAN PLOT" IN KUWAIT. "IF THE PLOT BY KUWAITI SOLDIERS (AGAINST U.S. INTERESTS) IS VERIFIED, THE CONCERNS THIS WOULD TRIGGER WOULD SURPASS ANYTHING IMAGINED UNTIL NOW. IT WOULD CAST A DAUNTING LIGHT ON THE HOLD THE SUNNI DJIHAD HAS IN THE GULF AND ON THE FRAILTY OF REGIONAL OIL REGIMES. THE INFILTRATION OF THEIR ARMED FORCES IS THE ULTIMATE NIGHTMARE FOR THESE GOVERNMENTS."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

IRAQ

"ILLUSION"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (01/06): "IT WILL BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO PUT AN END TO THE SUFFERING OF THE IRAQIS CAUGHT IN THE WAR THAN TO THE SUFFERING OF THE SURVIVORS OF THE TSUNAMI. PRESIDENT BUSH IS NO LONGER TALKING ABOUT BRINGING DEMOCRACY TO IRAQ OR ABOUT REBUILDING THAT COUNTRY. HIS GOAL IS TO WITHDRAW HIS TROOPS FROM THE QUAGMIRE HE SENT THEM TO, BUT WITHOUT CONCEDED DEFEAT IN THE FACE OF A 'NATIONAL ISLAMIC' IRAQI RESISTANCE HE CANNOT BREAK. THE JANUARY 30 ELECTIONS WERE SUPPOSED TO OFFER A WAY OUT, WITH THE 'IRAQISATION' OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THIS SOLUTION MAY BE CUT SHORT BY THE INTIMIDATION TECHNIQUES USED BY TERRORIST GROUPS. IT IS NOT TOTALLY CERTAIN AT THIS POINT WHETHER THE ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE. AND IF THEY DO, IT IS EVEN LESS CERTAIN WHETHER THEY WILL SERVE ANY PURPOSE. THERE IS NO OTHER CONCEIVABLE END TO THIS WAR THAN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A REGIME THAT FULLY REPRESENTS ALL IRAQIS AND IS ABLE TO SECURE THE COUNTRY ALL THE WHILE FREEING IT FROM FOREIGN OCCUPATION. BUT ORGANIZING ELECTIONS IN A COUNTRY AT WAR, WITHOUT ANY INTERNATIONAL CONTROL, WITH ONE FIFTH OF THE POPULATION EXCLUDED FROM VOTING BY EITHER TERROR OR THROUGH A BOYCOTT, WILL RESULT IN A REGIME THAT WILL BE CONSIDERED TO BE ILLEGITIMATE BY THE SUNNIS, AND THEREFORE THREATENED BY CIVIL WAR. IN SUCH A CASE THE ELECTIONS WILL BE NOTHING OTHER THAN AN ILLUSION."

TSUNAMI - HUMANITARIAN AID AND POLITICS

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"SOLDIERS OF LIFE"

CHARLES LAMBROSCHINI IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (01/06): "BY HELPING ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WITH THE LARGEST MUSLIM POPULATION THE U.S. IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF AN OPPORTUNITY TO ERASE ITS IMAGE OF ENEMY OF ISLAM. AS OPPOSED TO THE INTERVENTION IN IRAQ, THE GIS ARE NOT COMING TO ASIA AS CONQUERORS BUT AS SAVIORS. SIXTY YEARS AFTER THE MARSHALL

PLAN, THIS STRATEGY OF GENEROSITY RESPONDS TO THE SAME MOTIVATIONS. GEORGE BUSH'S DECISION TO MULTIPLY BY TEN AMERICA'S AID IS DEVOID OF ANY AMBIGUITY. THE U.S. SOLDIERS LANDING IN ASIA HAVE HERE NO REASON TO USE THEIR WEAPONS. WHEREAS IN VIETNAM THE AMERICANS WERE UNABLE TO CONQUER THE `HEARTS AND MINDS,' THERE IS IN ASIA NO POSSIBILITY FOR CONFUSION. AS CLAUSEWITZ ONCE SAID, A NATURAL DISASTER CAN ALSO LEAD TO DOING POLITICS DIFFERENTLY."

"COMPETITION"

GERARD DUPUY IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (01/06): "IN ASIA, THE U.S. IS FINDING AN UNHOPED FOR AND RESPECTABLE NEW WAY TO USE ITS WAR MACHINE, JUST WHEN ITS SUPERIORITY IS PRODUCING THE WORST POSSIBLE POLITICAL RESULTS IN IRAQ. BUT THOSE WHO CRITICIZE WASHINGTON'S ULTERIOR MOTIVES HAVE SIMILAR INTENTIONS."

"A NEW WORLD ORDER"

BRUNO FRAPPAT IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (01/06): "FOR THIS REAL WAR IN THE NAME OF GOOD, THERE IS NO ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, NO `MASTER OF THE WORLD.' IN JAKARTA, WHERE A CONFERENCE IS ATTEMPTING TO ORGANIZE THE UNPRECEDENTED FLOW OF GENEROSITY, LET US TRY TO FORGET, FOR A TIME, ULTERIOR MOTIVES, RIVALRIES AND COMPETITION ABOUT THE `COMMUNICATION' STRATEGIES WHICH ARE BEING ELABORATED."

"MAKING PROPER USE OF A DISASTER"

JACQUES AMALRIC IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (01/06): "WHEN PRESIDENT BUSH BECAME AWARE THAT THE TSUNAMI DISASTER COULD HELP WASHINGTON PROJECT A MORE POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE U.S. ARMY TO THE WORLD THAN THE ONE COMING FROM IRAQ, HE TURNED THE 15 MILLION DOLLARS INTO 350. NOTHING AS YET PROVES THAT THE DISASTER IN SOUTH ASIA WILL ALLOW WASHINGTON TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF THE `EMPIRE OF GOOD' AND TO ERASE THE IRAQI FIASCO. BUT THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY WE MUST PUT ON HOLD ALL OUR INDECENT RIVALRIES AND CONFIRM THE UN IN ITS ROLE AS SOLE COORDINATOR FOR THE EMERGENCY RELIEF EFFORT AND FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS THAT WILL CONTINUE FOR YEARS." LEACH